

## COMPARISON OF PERSONALITY TRAITS OF MOTHERS OF XCEPTIONAL STUDENTS AND NORMAL STUDENTS OF THE CITY OF DANESFAHAN

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**Mg. GolestanJahanshlou**  
Takestan Azad University,  
General Psychology.  
Jahan32027@gmail.com

**Mg. NargesNajari Almouti**  
Takestan Azad University,  
General Psychology.

**Mg.FahimehTaherKhani**  
Takestan Azad University,  
General Psychology.

**Mg. Sara Bajelan**  
Takestan Azad University  
General Psychology.

**Mg. Chehreh Kharamlou**  
Takestan Azad University  
General Psychology.

**Resumen:** El papel más importante de las madres tanto en el hogar como en el entorno social es el papel de la crianza. La importancia de este papel es clara ya que el bebé es acogido en los brazos de la madre por primera vez. La personalidad del niño refleja la personalidad de sus padres, especialmente la de su madre. El método descriptivo de investigación es de tipo correlacional. Para ello, se seleccionaron 34 estudiantes mujeres de la ciudad de Danesfahan por muestreo aleatorio. La herramienta de recopilación de datos es un cuestionario breve sobre los rasgos de personalidad de NEO. Los datos fueron analizados utilizando métodos estadísticos descriptivos y el software SPSS. En este estudio se utilizó la prueba t independiente para comprobar la correlación significativa entre las puntuaciones medias de los participantes. El nivel de significación por debajo de 0,05 indica la diferencia entre los dos puntajes promedio en el campo de la neurosis, la extroversión y la apertura a la experiencia. Las madres con niños discapacitados tienen un nivel significativamente mayor de ansiedad y depresión. Son más introvertidas y su apertura a la experiencia es más que la de las madres con hijos normales. Aunque las madres con niños discapacitados tienen una puntuación media más alta en grado de conformidad con las condiciones de vida y conciencia, esta diferencia no es significativa. Las madres de niños excepcionales enfrentan una gran cantidad de problemas y desafíos y se deprimen por el alto volumen de estímulos angustiosos. Por lo tanto, mediante la adopción de decisiones y políticas sólidas a nivel micro y macro, deberían adoptarse medidas para reducir la gravedad de estas tensiones.

**Palabras clave:** Rasgos de personalidad, estudiantes excepcionales, estudiantes normales

**Abstract:** Mothers' most significant role both in home and in social environment is the nurturing role. The importance of such role is clear since the infant is pacified in mother's arms for the first time. Child's personality reflects their parents' personality especially their mother's. The descriptive research method is of correlational type. For this purpose, 34 mothers of normal and exceptional students from the city of Danesfahan were selected by random sampling. Data-gathering tool is short questionnaire forms on NEO personality traits. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods and SPSS software. In this study the independent t-test was used for checking the significant correlation between the average scores of the participants.

The significance level below 0.05 indicates the different significance between the two average scores in the field of neurosis, extroversion, and the openness to experience. Mothers with disabled children have a significantly higher level of anxiety and depression. They are more introverted and their openness to experience is more than that of mothers with normal children. Although mothers with disabled children have a higher mean score in degree of agreeability with living conditions and conscientiousness, this difference is not significant. Mothers of exceptional children face a great deal of problems and challenges and become depressed by high volume of distressing stimuli. Therefore, by making sound decisions and policies at micro and macro level, actions should be taken in such a way as to reduce the severity of these tensions.

**Keywords:** Personality traits, exceptional Students, Normal Students

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mothers' most significant role both in home and in social environment is the nurturing role. The importance of such role is clear since the infant is pacified in mother's arms for the first time and learns social customs from her. Also mothers are a safe haven for their children due to their sincere emotions and the child takes refuge with his mother whenever he or she feels insecure and seeks the security in her arms. It is here that the mother's nurturing role as the main focus of upbringing has been shown and should be carefully analyzed. The birth of any child may be expected to be a pleasant incident or, conversely, a stressful emotional experience for parents.

Parents expect a healthy child, but when a child is born with a disability, dreams and fantasies may be painful (Bagheri, 2004). In fact, the birth of a disabled child is a sign of the death of their parents' ideas especially mothers'. For various reasons, part of the population of each country always suffers from physical and psychological damages (Murgatty and Wolf, 1993). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, the prevalence of the world's exceptional children and adolescents is currently 500 million, and with increasing population in the world, this number is rising in the future (ArjmandNia 2008).

The birth of a disabled child by itself is a worrying factor for family compatibility (SaifNaraghi and Naderi 2010, quoted from Alaghband et al., 2010). Long-term care, high medical, educational, and training costs, intensified marital conflicts are among the major issues parents face ( Hauser, 2011; quoted by Gau, 2008). Therefore, taking care of such children is stressful for families and depends to a large extent on the child's conditions (gender, age, degree of disability, and family resources available). Also, the socio-economic status of these families and the use of social, family and economic resources are directly

related to family functioning (Sen, 2007). Exceptional children and their parents not only interact with each other, but also affect other members of the family system, the other children. The presence of an exceptional child often brings irreparable damages to the family, especially the mother. The degree of family vulnerability to such damages is sometimes to the extent that causes family behavioral disorders (Farber, 2011).

Studies have shown that mothers with disabled children suffer from stress and psychological crisis and that the presence of an unpleasant child threatens their compatibility as well as their physical and mental health. This often has a negative impact on them (Lalovita, Italinna and Leinonen, 2003, Ronit, 2002, Minnes, 1985, Gupta and Singhl, 2004; SharifiDaramadi, 1381; Ilali, 1386). In the study of the prevalence of psychological and social problems of parents of exceptional children, which was conducted in Isfahan city on 120 parents of retarded children, the results showed that 45.6% of mothers and 38.4% of fathers suffered from severe and moderate psychological problems, respectively (Ghazavi and Nasiri, 2004). Also, conducted studies (Eisenhower et al., 2005) have shown that mothers with mentally retarded children have lower levels of general and psychological health and higher levels of anxiety and depression than that of mothers with normal children.

Studies of the impact of the birth of a child with disabilities on the family show that signs of depression and family disruption are much more witnessed in mothers. They do not devote much time to themselves or care about their own health and they are in a low mood (kouhsali, 1387). Since at present, one of the most important topics in the psychological context of exceptional children is to address the issues of their families, it is necessary to consider the problems of these families in

relation to their children's problems in order to find appropriate solutions. The present research seeks to answer the question of whether there is any difference between the personality traits of the mothers of exceptional students and that of the mothers of normal students in the city of Danesfahan.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive correlational research method that was performed on 34 mothers by random sampling method in 2016. In this study, the statistical population includes all the mothers of exceptional and normal children studying at exceptional and normal schools in the city of Danesfahan. The sample included 17 mothers of normal students and 17 mothers of exceptional students who were randomly selected. The selected people entered the study after oral consent. The data-gathering tool is short forms of NEO personality trait questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 60 questions that are used to investigate the five main factors of personality (neurosis, extraversion, flexibility, pleasure, and conscientiousness). The responses of this questionnaire are based on the Lycra scale (totally disagree, disagree, indifferent, agree, and totally agree). This questionnaire is divided into five groups of 12 questions. Each question takes a score between 1 and 5. Therefore, altogether, individuals earn up to 60 grades on each personality trait. The NEO-FFI personality questionnaire by McCrae and Kasta was conducted on 208 American students in a three-month interval, with a validity coefficient ranging from 0.75 to 0.83. The long-term validation of this questionnaire has also been evaluated. A long-term, 6-year study on the scales of neuroticism, extroversion, and openness to experience has shown validity coefficients of 0.68 to 0.83 in the reports of both individuals and couples. The validity coefficient of the two factors of agreeableness and conscientiousness in a two-year interval was 0.63 and 0.79 respectively (McCrae and Kasta, 1983 quoted by GarousiFarshi, 2001). In the standardization of the NEO test by GarousiFarshi (2001) on a sample of 2000 students from the universities of Tabriz, Shiraz, and the universities of medical sciences of these two cities, the correlation coefficient of the five aspects has been reported from 0.56 to 0.87.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the major factors of neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeability, and conscientiousness where obtained 0.86, 0.73, 0.56, 0.68, and 0.87 respectively. In order to assess the content validity of this test, the correlation between the two personal report form (S) and observer assessment form (R) was used and the maximum correlation

was 0.66 in the extroversion factor and at least 0.45 in the agreeability factor (GarousiFarshi, 2001).

In AtashRouz's research (2007), by using the internal consistency method, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the five traits (neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeability and conscientiousness) was obtained 0.74, 0.55, 0.27, 0.38, and 0.77 respectively.

### 2.1. Statistical methods:

In this study, data analysis and comparison of independent groups of mothers of exceptional children and mothers of normal children in 5 NEO scales were used by t-test. To describe the data and analyze them, SPSS software was used.

### 2.2. Findings:

The participants included two 17-person groups of mothers with disabled children and mothers with normal children. The personal profile of the participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Personal profile of the participants Neo Personality Inventory classifies individuals into 5 personality groups.

variable	standard deviation	minimum age	maximum age
Mothers with normal children	7.4	24	51
Mothers with exceptional children	8.9	20	51

To assess each personality group, 12 questions are included in the questionnaire, which is scored from 1 to 5. Scores gained from 12 to 60 are categorized into three ranges of behavioral emergence. Table 2 shows the frequency of individuals in each group and range of behavior, respectively.

Table 2. The Frequency of Participants in each range of behavior

	Personality Index	neurosis	extroversion	New experience	agreeability	conscientiousness
Mothers-with normal students	12 - 24	0	2	1	2	0
	24 - 48	16	15	16	16	17
	48 - 60	1	0	0	0	0
Mothers with exceptional students	12 - 24	0	0	0	1	0
	24 - 48	15	16	17	16	17
	48 - 60	2	1	0	0	0

Neurosis range examines the individual's mental anxiety from the absence of evident worry to the presence of anxiety in the majority of individual behaviors. In the domain of extroversion, the more one gets a lower score, the more intrinsic their personality is and the increase in this score means the person's tendency for extraversion. Also, a rise

in the range of tendency to new experiences, agreeability, and conscientiousness means a more full presence of these attributes in personality. Table 3 shows the range and average scores for the two groups of participants in these five domains. It is observed that apart from the average score of extraversion in the group of mothers of exceptional children, the rest of average scores range from 30 to 40. This shows the middle range of personality traits emergence in the participants.

*Table 3. The range and average scores of the participants in the two groups in five personality domains*

Personality index	neurosis	extroversion	New experience	agreeability	conscientiousness	
Mothers with normal students	range	30-47	22-36	23-38	23-38	29-34
	average	37.3	31.6	30.8	33.7	31.5
	Standard deviation	4.4	3.1	3	3.5	1.7
Mothers with exceptional students	range	32-50	30-45	32-41	23-40	23-48
	average	40.1	25.6	36.65	36.4	32.4
	Standard deviation	4.9	4.7	2.85	3.4	4.8

*Table 4. Independent-T Results in the Assessment of the Average Characteristics of Mothers with Disabled and Healthy Children*

Personality index	neurosis	extroversion	New experiences or flexibility	agreeability	conscientiousness
Average difference	208	6	5.7	2.6	0.9
Freedom degree	32	32	32	32	32
t	3.4	4.3	5.7	2.2	0.7
Significant level	0.04	0	0	0.3	0.48

Table 4 shows the results of Independent t-test in assessing the personality average scores for mothers of disabled and normal children. Since the significance level of less than 0.05 indicates the significance of the difference between the two average scores, only in the two domains of extroversion and openness to experience, difference in significance has been obtained in the two groups. Mothers with disabled children are significantly more introverted and also their openness to experience is higher than that of mothers with no disabled child. Although mothers with disabled children had a higher average score in terms of agreeability with living conditions and conscientiousness, this difference was not significant.

### 3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the results of this study, it was found that there is a significant difference between the neurotic personality of mothers of exceptional and that of mothers with normal children. Mothers of mentally retarded children had a higher score in neurosis than that of mothers with normal children. These findings are in agreement with the results of the research conducted by other researchers. The study (Miller, 2008) showed that the parents of mentally retarded children experience more stress than mothers of children with normal growth and have a different personality in terms of personality traits from that of mothers of normal children.

(Glidden, 2009) showed that mothers of mentally retarded children had a higher neurosis score than mothers of normal children, indicating that they had lower emotional stability than mothers of normal children. In line with this research, it was reported (Rose, David & Jones, 2003) that there is a direct relationship between neurosis and stress among the caregivers of children with disabilities. Research (MousaviKhattat, 2011) on the cognitive, psychological, and social characteristics of parents with more than one exceptional child showed that mothers with exceptional children have a lower health level than that of mothers with normal children in four aspects of physical, anxiety-related, social factors, and depression. The results of this study also showed that there is a significant difference between the parents of exceptional and parents of normal students in terms of some personality factors. Mothers with exceptional children significantly have more tendency in terms of openness to experience. Also, mothers with normal children are more extroverted than those with exceptional children. These findings are consistent with the results of the research conducted by the following researchers.

(Brandon, 2007) during a study conducted in Australia showed that mothers of mentally retarded children have less time to work and have less time to engage in enjoyable activities and recreation.

The research also showed that mothers' time for personal care was reduced. Therefore, these mothers become more vulnerable due to the limited time they devote to themselves. Conducted studies (Baker, Blacher, and Eisenhower, 2005) have shown that mothers with exceptional students have a lower general and psychological health level than that of mothers with normal students.

All of these studies show that mothers of exceptional children face a great deal of problems and challenges and become depressed by high

volume of distressing stimuli. Therefore, by making sound decisions and policies at micro and macro level, actions should be taken in such a way as to reduce the severity of these tensions.

In terms of conscientiousness and agreeability, no difference was found between the personality of mothers with exceptional children and mothers with normal children. Research constraints included: 1- reluctance of some mothers to cooperate 2- a large number of questions and fatigue in taking the test.

#### 4. SUGGESTIONS BASED ON THE FINDINGS:

5.

Exceptional education officials of the country and authorities of welfare organization, as well as counselors, psychologists and educators of exceptional students should help the parents of exceptional students especially mothers through necessary training and counseling. They need to teach parents how to treat mentally retarded children to lessen their stress and become more comfortable in living with their disabled child. According to research findings showing that mothers with exceptional children are more introverted than those with normal children, it is necessary to establish some intensive programs towards training these mothers in counseling and psychotherapy centers.

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